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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000391

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/SE, ANKARA FOR C BLAHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: BUREAUCRATS DISAPPOINTED WITH WORKING-LEVEL  
MEETINGS WITH TURKEY

Classified By: Ambassador John Ordway for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

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MFA COMES HOME WITH LESS THAN IT HOPED FOR  
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1. (C) MFA Turkey Desk Officer Anahit Harutunyan told us February 13 that the MFA returned from the latest GOAM-GOT technical meeting having accomplished less than it had hoped for, specifically regarding a potential border opening or scheduling regular encounters between FMs Oskanian and Gul. Harutunyan called the meeting, held the first week of February in Vienna with MFA Office Directors from both countries, the "least productive" of the past year. Discussion of Nagorno-Karabagh reportedly dominated most of the conversation and kept the participants from working through their planned agenda. She stopped short of assigning blame for the current impasse but shared her impression that recent pressure on Turkey by Azerbaijani President Aliyev had spooked her bureaucratic counterparts.

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GOAM HOPEFUL FOR REGULAR OSKANIAN-GUL CONTACT  
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2. (C) Harutunyan commented that, despite the sluggish pace of the recent meeting, the MFA was pleased that the topic of regularly scheduled meetings between FMs Oskanian and Gul was now at least an issue of discussion. She said that the FMs would likely speak on the telephone in early March and said that the GOAM was anxious to schedule stand-alone meetings as opposed to pull-asides during multilateral events. She reiterated that the GOAM wanted the border with Turkey opened as soon as possible but noted that FM Oskanian's optimism on the subject did not match the expectations of bureaucrats managing the day-to-day aspects of the issue. She thanked the USG for recent comments by Secretary Powell supporting an open border during his meeting with Turkish FM Gul in Tbilisi.

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COMMENT  
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3. (C) Comment: Harutunyan's measured reaction regarding opening the border contrasted sharply to the upbeat predictions of FM Oskanian earlier this year. Her comments, together with recent remarks by Middle East Division Chief Karen Mirzoyan, underscore the need for public intervention by high-level leaders if bureaucrats from both countries are to have sufficient room to maneuver closer together.

ORDWAY